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THREE LOVERS.

My love is a winsome maiden,
With eyes half brown, half blue,
And her yellow braids show auburn shades,
And truth is not more true
Than the heart that beats in her bosom—
But it does not beat for you.

She is as fair and graceful
As ladies of high degree,
While I am a sun-browned farmer,
And one of her lovers three.
And my heart keeps time to a flowing rhyme,
When her soft eyes smile on me.

A poet comes to woo her,
And he sings her many a lay,
And in serenade and sonnet
He sues her night and day;
But he does not move the heart of my love—
And she turns her face away.

An artist comes to woo her;
His canvas glows with dyes
That are borrowed from sunset splendor—
But my lady turns her eyes
Across and away to my field of hay,
And she does not heed his sighs.

I am neither bard nor poet,
And my pictures none can see;
But the words I speak will flush her cheek,
And she does not turn from me—
For the humble sun-browned farmer,
Is the chosen of the three.

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox, in St. Louis Magazine.*

WOOD-FEARS.

They Are Proofs That Nature Is Strange to Us.

Unless we live in the country, the woods play but a small part in our lives. We see them only in the summer holidays, perhaps not even then; we become as strangers to their beauty, and for longer or shorter periods forget to think of them. And yet, aside from all physical consequences, what a dreary world it would be were there no forests! Our thought would be parched and restless, and, so to speak, without eyelids. The busiest and most persistently urban among us would lose an horizon restful to the eye, a curtain of green and peaceful recollections.

To the wild creatures who inhabit it, the wood is full of terrors. It is at once a covert and a snare, a place of refuge and of lurking danger. The tree that shelters the small bird conceals the movements of his enemy, the owl, the squirrel, or the black snake; there is protection beneath the underbrush, but no certitude as to what lies on the other side of its leafage. Every thing in the wood appears to be in a perpetual state of watchfulness or of easily routed security. The sparrow by the roadside will [illegible] you for a listener, if you keep within bounds of the auditorium; transgress them a little, and he measures off another dozen feet to the next post, and begins the concert afresh. The chipmunk, after his first start and scurry, pauses to eye the intruder before slipping into his hole, and the glance is often an assured one. But the wood bird and squirrel have no low curiosity and no desire to be seen; they are up and away at the first alarm. The only birds who are careless of a new presence in the woods are the tiny warblers and fly-catching tribes, who live first floor below the stars and take small note of events in the rez-de-chaussee, and the chickadee, who brings in from orchard and pasture a fund of cheerful audacity to be paid out among the shadows.

Do not we ourselves, on entering the wood, take on a certain increase of susceptibility and alertness analogous to this deepened timidity and caution of the birds? Have we no wood-fears? They may be definite and substantial or altogether vague, but I think that most of us have felt some quaver of this innate distrust, this readiness to take alarm in the forest. "See his little breast heave," I once said, pointing out to a startled maiden a chipmunk, who, in the flurry of his own terror, had been the cause of hers. "I don't wonder at it," she replied, fervently. "Mine does." There are all degrees of this sensitiveness, according to the fineness or cultivation of the imagination. There are people who suspect every unfamiliar leaf or berry of malicious intent to poison them, who will hardly pluck a flower without challenge, and are more wary of drinking at a mountain stream than of imbibing the filtered liquid which usurps the name of water in the city. And country people have more shrinkings and small superstitions, albeit of a homelier and more absolvable sort, than the most urban of excursionists. The children, on returning from a day's berrying, or "plumming," as they quaintly call it in some parts, report of hearing a bear in the forest border, and are half convinced that their escape to the sunlight has been a narrow one. Toads and snakes are not looked upon with more favor by those nearest to their haunts. What a venerable cult is that fear of snakes. It is as old as the oldest religion; it is so widespread that we can almost call it universal, and has roots so deep that it is impossible to tell whether they are fastened in instinct or in tradition. The fact that it is shared by birds and other animals points to the former source; but if the feeling had not its rise in tradition, it has certainly been among the most potent factors in creating it. The vivid emeralds and harmonious wood-tints of the snake, his patterned spots and stripes, his reproduction in almost every movement of Hogarth's line of beauty, win for him no admiration. Even his innocence is no shield to him: the world will not be brought to believe it. Take away his fangs and reduce him to a puny size, the aversion he inspires is there all the same, illogical yet ineradicable.

Thus it is with the majority of the sensations which I term wood-fears. Apart from all vulgar, tangible apprehension of being bitten or stung, there exists a host of tiny intangible "fearlets," which tease our imaginations or lurk unsuspected in the background of our consciousness. Alone in the forest, we listen and keep a lookout; there is a course to be shaped; we are alive to every whisper; we startle the partridge, and are startled by him in turn. An unexplained noise has everywhere an unfriendly sound, and under the trees noises do not so readily explain themselves as in the open country. The very screams and bellowings of the farmyard, familiar as they are, sound new and unaccountable when heard at intervals across a wooded ridge or valley. Sometimes it is the creaking and soughing of the boughs; the tree-tops, on a windy day, give forth unearthly moans. I have found the cause of a recurrent and perplexing cry in a rude instrument formed by the crossing of two branches, of which the one sawed upon the other like a violin bow drawn across a string. Both bow and string, stout and tough of fiber, were worn and polished by long practice of that solitary note. Even the lightest wood has its hushed twitterings, its vanishings and inexplicable rustlings.

The copse-depths into little noises start.

I remember as a child being made curious, then awed, and gradually frightened by a low sound resembling a gentle, regular breathing, which proceeded from under an alder-bush on the edge of a swampy thicket. I drew nearer and peeped in. The only live thing visible was a brown thrush, who, indeed, was skulking away, as if caught in the act; but I knew that was only his usual conscious, embarrassed air, and refused to suspect him of any connection with the disturbance. No other culprit appeared, and yet the even respirations continued, till my courage, like that of Bob Acres, oozed away, and I fled, not from an apparation, but from a vibration.

More appalling than any sound is the silence and lonesomeness of the deep forest. One is haunted by the antiquity which is symboled in long moss beards, and which lies visible all around in huge decaying trees, the unburied ancestors of the monarchs who are still standing strong in their girth of rings. It suggests the Palæozoic era and the formation of coal to see those great trunks, hewn down by time and tempest, half sunken in the earth, and already perhaps many seasons on in the existence which is theirs after death. Covered with mosses and bright fungi, they seem still half sentient and more wrought upon by age than the coal itself, which has forgotten and become inorganic so long ago that years do not count. Among those aged generations the mountain climber is an anarchronism as well as an intruder, and is confronted at every step by the question what he doth there. Time has put obstacles in his way; to make any progress, he must clamber over logs, tack around bowlders, and avoid impenetrable places. There silence reigns, with a break now and then, which leaves it to settle again deeper than before. Even so busy and cheerful a sound as the woodpecker's hammer divides and intensifies the stillness with a certain solemnity.

In ancient days of superstition the croaking of a raven foreboded ill-hap. If there were an index expurgatory of New England birds, the jay, for all his heavenly plumage, would have to be placed in it. There are few bird notes more weird than that high scream of his, heard in the autumn across the brown fields or through the arches of the pine grove. It rings through all the aisles, making the quietude like a hush of apprehension.

There are moments when, on entering the woods, one seems to have broken in upon some high festivity of Nature. A few hours before, in the same spot, life was suspended; one could walk from end to end of the wood path and hear not a breath, detect no movement save of noiseless insects or a little leaf-hued frog, in complexion like his carpet. That was at the noon-tide solstice, when a rose-colored light filtered through broad leaves, and one could fancy siestas in progress behind the jalousies of green. But later in the day what groupings and activities! Squirrels start and scuttle off, thrushes beat a hasty retreat through the underbrush, partridges spring up with a sudden rustle of fright and indignation, and go whirring away in loud protest. You have disturbed the wood-gods at their feast, the fairies at a gathering, and your sense of intrusion is stronger than when you walked through the empty halls while they slept. There is something in these sylvan scatterings which suggests almost irresistibly the breaking-up of a fairy dance or a flight of shy nymphs. In early morning such interruptions give hints of a whole night of revelry, and tempt us to believe a little in "the good people," and half regret their banishment from power. The pale nymphs dancing at dawn, in a landscape of Corot's—are they not formed from the dawn itself, from the first shafts and glimmering of light on the forest's edge? And may not myths have been evolved in the same manner?

But of all imaginations that have peopled the woods, Shakspeare has most exquisitely fitted his creations into their shadows and sun-flecks, their green glades and nooks. Mr. Burroughs, in one of his delightful papers on the natural history of the poets, has paid tribute to the wonderful accuracy of Shakspeare's incidental characterizations of birds and plants. But beyond this intimate knowledge of herb and songster and creeping thing, there is in his outdoor comedies a breadth of greenery, a sense of the manifold harmonies and repose of the forest, a consciousness of its many tints and meanings. The oaks spread lovingly over Rosalind and the flowers grow about Perdita. Their speech does not disturb the quiet, nor ring false among the boughs. They jest and love; they were born in courts and must return thither; yet they belong to the greenwood, and we are never quite reconciled to seeing them on the stage. To find Shakespeare face to face, however, with the woods and the sky, we turn to The Tempest. I have always had a fancy that in this play, as in the Sonnets, the poet "unlocked his heart," but that time or our own dullness has sealed it again. The Tempest seems to me more indicative of our relations to Nature than any other writing. We see in it her terrors, her beauty, and her inscrutableness. We are wrought upon by a spell; but submit to it reverently, and it is a kindly spell, while all our counter-spells and petty insubordinations dash themselves against it and end in failure. I have often questioned whether these paltry fears and startings in the woods are not punishments, marks of a departure from Nature and cessation of familiar intimate intercourse with her. But read in the light of The Tempest, they may be partly signs of election; calls to reverence and to wholesome fear; reminders of the mystery which lies about us, and which we are apt to forget in the sunlight, though it is there in its solemnity no less than in the shadow.

—*Sophia Kirk, in Atlantic Monthly.*

BATTLE OF ANTS.

The March of Two Armies, the Desperate Attack and Heroic Repulse.

In the summer, a year ago, a swarm of black ants, Formica Pennsylvanica, built their nest between the ceiling and roof of a shed near our dwelling in the suburbs of Philadelphia. At a distance of a few hundred feet from the shed a second colony of the same species had also built a home in a sheltered place. Both nests were unusually populous.

Battles between ants of different species, fought for the purpose of capturing slaves, have been often described. But on a bright morning in August I was a witness of a fight between these two colonies of the same species, which could have been waged for no such purpose, and which gave the occasion for a greater display of forethought on the part of the combatants than is usually conceded to the ant.

The nest in the roof was the one attacked. The only approach to it from the ground was by a post and plastered wall about six feet high. A smooth plank floor fitted closely against the wall and post, and was raised above the ground by a low step. This floor was the scene of the conflict.

While I stood wondering at the unusual commotion I saw at the distance of a few feet a host of small workers, closely followed by a great horde of soldiers streaming along a fence from the other distant nest. They must have numbered thousands. In a very short time these hostile workers had descended the fence to the ground, swarmed up the steps to the door, and poured in crowds upon the defensive scouts. The antagonists rushed upon each other, and with their strong jaws cut off here a leg and there an antenna, and sometimes severed the body of an opponent at a blow. The foremost soldiers of the defensive party soon came to the rescue, and the swarm of hostile workers were driven back toward the step.

But by this time the soldiers of the attacking party had reached the floor, moving deliberately onward in a dense, black mass, crushing the smaller foes as they advanced. In a few moments the small workers were either all killed or retired from the front. Then the battle between the soldiers of the opposing forces began in earnest. Halting a moment till their ranks were close and compact, though by no means regular, the invaders advanced to the attack in a dense mass, seeming to completely cover the floor over which they moved. In this close array they met the defenders, whom they greatly outnumbered. They were received, however, with a courage as great as their own, and their ranks were quickly broken up and thrown into apparent disorder.

After the general charge had been thus made and the combatants were mixed in an undistinguishable crowd, single champions were seen rushing around the floor seeking a foe. When two of these champions approached each other a mutual examination with the ends of their antenna seemed necessary to tell foe from friend. Many such meetings were friendly, and after the salutation both would rush away at full speed. But when by the delicate test of feeling or whatever serves them to thus distinguish, each had found an enemy, they rushed upon one another with the utmost rage, clinched both with feet and jaws, and, doubling themselves up, rolled over the floor, biting and tearing each other, entirely undisturbed in their deadly work by being lifted up into the air with a pair of forceps. At one time the floor was very nearly black with these rolling combatants.

As the battle progressed the superior numbers of the invaders drove the defenders of their home slowly backward to the foot of the post. Then a number of the small workers, who had been stationed upon the post, ran rapidly up to the nest. In a moment a fresh army of soldiers, numbering many hundreds, rushed from the nest, and, descending the post, passed the guards at the base and fell upon the victorious foe, driving them back slowly but steadily to the edge of the step. The guards at the base of the post did not appear to leave their station to engage in the the general fight, and only took part in it at all when the attacking soldiers tried to pass them to reach the nest.

The fight lasted about five hours and ended in a total rout of the attacking party. Toward the close the wounded, doubtless of the invading party, were seen dragging themselves off the field, generally carrying with them some enemy which had fastened upon them by his jaws in a death embrace. In many cases these attacked foeman were found to consist only of a pair of jaws and a head, all the rest of the body having been torn away in the fight. With bulldog tenacity the head held on firmly, resisting all efforts of the wounded ants to remove it.—*Cor. Philadelphia Ledger.*

SCIENCE AND FICTION.

The Manner in Which the Two Are Indebted to Each Other.

The bonds linking together science and fiction are already strong. Science owes to our novelists much of its interest, much of its publicity. The scientist slowly and laboriously hammers out some new discovery, some recognition of the individuality of a certain group of symptoms which had been previously lost in the crowd; wearied with his work, he too often launches this discovery, with all the ugliness of technicality hanging around it like a convict's dress, betokening the hard labor through which it has passed; and then some good Samaritan of a novelist turns out of his way to take pity on it, to lavish care upon it, to clothe it anew, to attract to it the attention of the public, and thus to save it from death through neglect. It is introduced into good society, and it thrives, and perhaps becomes a leading topic of conversation for a short time.

But if the scientist has reason to be grateful, so also has the novelist. New facts have been given to him, new marvels to dilate upon and make his own; he has been supplied with new modes of escape from the web of intricacies with which he has entangled his characters, and thus the advantage is mutual.

For the continuance of this good fellowship there is reason to be hopeful. Medical science has never perhaps been more active than at the present time. The new diseases and the new methods of treatment which have not been utilized in novels are already forming a portentous crowd clamoring for recognition in story. Neurasthenia and its cure by the Weir Mitchell process of massage has not, to my knowledge, yet been drawn in, although the marvelous cures of bed-ridden individuals would seem to furnish scope for an interesting worker. The antiseptic process also has its picturesque sides; the saving of life and limb on the battle-field, as furnished by the medical records of the last Egyptian campaign, gives ample opportunity for surprises of the most telling character.

The recognition of hitherto unrealized disease by means of the ophthalmoscope and the prognostic value of the signs might also be described. Locomotio ataxia has already played a part in an Agnostic dialogue in a contemporary, but there is yet room for its further development in the pages of fiction. Metallo-therapy is too much discredited now to find favor, but the prophylactic action of copper against cholera was until recently sufficiently unproven to allow of its being swept into the vortex of fiction, for the instruction of those who do not follow the medical journals assiduously.

It is impossible to lay down rules or to point out all the lines which might be followed. The aim of this article is to show from the past what has been worthily accomplished, what has been recklessly undertaken, as well as the mistakes of those attempting to foretell the future of medicine, in the hope that, while affording interest to the public, it may also help novelists, who, with the materialist of a recent poet:

Would learn with the boldest to think,
Would grapple with things that perplex,
Would stand on the verge and the brink
Where the seen and the unseen are met.

Nineteenth Century.

QUEER ANSWERS.

Ambiguous Remarks Made by Persons Who Failed to Weigh Their Words.

There is something that is fresh and invigorating in a piquant and unexpected answer which is like a dash of salt spray on the face, it half takes away the breath while it arouses an active vitality by the sensation it creates. To this class belongs the answer of the bashful young minister who was invited to stay and dine at the house of a wealthy parishioner upon whom he was calling. The host, after the fashion of the day, apologized for the dinner and said had they expected company it would have been better.

"Really, sir," replied the young man, "I am very thankful, for what I have had, as I did not expect to get my dinner here."

A young woman who had been visiting relatives was treated with the greatest hospitality, and as she was leaving her friends ventured to hope that she had enjoyed herself.

"I have had nothing to complain of," was her answer, which was negative praise to say the least.

A lady who dresses elegantly and belongs to the high perch of social plumage made a formal call recently upon a lady of her acquaintance and waited in the parlor while her card was sent up. A tiny specimen of a girl was present, who eyed the elegant visitor very closely and seemed much interested in her appearance.

"Well, my dear," remarked the visitor, with approval, as she smoothed out her silks and laces, "what do you think of me?"

"Oh," said the little girl, with the charming candor of childhood, "I've seen flounces before!"

"Well, Jimmy, you've bought a new horse, have you?" said an acquaintance to a friend, "he isn't much to look at, is he?"

"Sure, I didn't buy him to look at," answered Jimmy, dryly, as he jogged along.—*Detroit Free Press.*

FARMERS' CLUBS.

The Advantages of Small and Well-Arranged Neighborhood Societies.

I have made a careful study of "farmers' clubs" and how to conduct them, for ten years, and in so doing have changed my views considerably. I at first advocated county or township clubs as the best possible organization for the farmer. I have attended some of the best county clubs to be found anywhere, and I have never seen one that I thought would compare with the local clubs with which I am familiar. In the large club the attendance is always irregular and the talking is sure to be done by the few. It is probably impossible to get a hundred or more men together in an organization without getting some who are windy and verbose, and in the large organization the timid, who most need the training that preparation for, and participation in, the discussion would furnish, are given no chance. The best farmers' club in my estimation is made up of twelve or thirteen families, enough so they can meet once a month, and get round in a year, meeting at the homes of the members. It is well to have one extra family, so that in case of sickness or any good reason why a family can not take the club at the time assigned, the extra family can take it. The advantages of the small club are: 1. The members are all thoroughly acquainted with each other from the start. 2. The attendance is sure to be regular, for in a small organization of this kind each member knows he will be missed, and ten years' observation in two clubs of this kind has shown me that a member is rarely absent unless unavoidably detained. In such a club every member is put on duty. The president assigns to the members their parts for each meeting and sees that all are called out, and every member takes part, and even the most timid soon find it easy to do duty. Our programme is prepared a year in advance and printed, in which is given the place and time of meeting, and the topics and various sub-topics to be discussed.—*W. B. Brown, in Stockman.*

PITH AND POINT.

—It requires very little ability to find fault. That is why there are so many critics.

—There is a man in Wisconsin who owns sixty newspapers. He is so poor that his clothes rattle when he walks.—*Burlington Free Press.*

—There are some men who have so much genius that they can't do anything but sit around all day and think about it.—*Shoe and Leather Reporter.*

—"Please inform me if there is any cat of the height of two feet?" asks a correspondent. There is not. The size of the voice probably misled you.

—We don't wish to deter anybody from being polite, but we can't help observing that many a man has been a heavy loser through a civil action.—*Boston Post.*

—One cause of the throat and lung trouble in this country is the fact that all of us sing too much and so sweetly. Neither the throat nor the lungs were intended to stand such strains.

—Disgusted writer—I don't believe the papers want good poetry. Friend—Oh, I guess they do. D. W.—No, they do not. I've just had two poems refused. Friend—Oh, now I know they do.—*Chicago Rambler.*

—"Charley, what is a chestnut bell?" said his girl. "Oh, its, a bell that rings when any one tells an old story." "Well, they couldn't call me a chestnut belle; I have no ring." It succeeded, and they are to be married when Charley has his salary raised.—*N. Y. Graphic.*

—Lightning struck a hive of bees in Kansas the other day. The painful story is soon told. The misguided lightning came out of that hive quicker than it went in, and went off into space with its tail between its legs. Moral: Never pick a quarrel where you are not acquainted with the folks.—*Texas Siftings.*

—What made him proud—

He didn't jump off the Brooklyn bridge,
And he swam not the rapids cool,
He balanced him not on a fearful ridge,
He wasn't so big a fool,
But he is as proud as a row of pins.
In his feelings there's none to compare;
For his squash was bigger than Neighbor Winn's,
And he took the first prize at the fair.

—*Goodall's Sun.*

—Most every body has his pet phrase, which he is apt to use on all occasions. Mr. Hayseed's is "met with some success." "How are you getting on with your stock-raising, Mr. Hayseed?" he was asked recently. "Well," he replied, "I've met with some success in raisin' calves." "How's your oldest boy doing at school?" "Well, he's meetin' with some success as a scholar." "He ought to, for he has been well brought up. Your wife is a splendid woman, Mr. Hayseed." "Well, yes, the old lady has—er—met with some success as a female."—*N. Y. Tribune.*

CARE OF THE THROAT.

Muffling the Cause of a Majority of Severe Winter Colds.

Much trouble and annoyance, to say nothing of the actual throat ailments, during the winter months, may be avoided by a little forethought in that direction.

The question for consideration is: Shall we muffle the throat during the winter? The answer is: Except on rare severe days or unless suffering from illness, No. Of course if one has already begun to wear a muffler or scarf, then, in all probability, it will have to be continued during the winter.

The experience of one who has tried both ways is here given as an illustration of the truth which we advocate. The writer of this article personally knew of a young man who was always in the habit of wearing a woolen scarf around his neck during the winter. Commencing early in the fall, it was continued until the cold spring days had passed. This individual rarely went through a winter without one or two colds, and frequently a sore throat lasting usually several days. In addition to this the throat was always tender and easily affected by the wind.

Several years ago he discarded the scarf entirely. During the first winter of going without a scarf, he had but one cold, and that not a severe one, and in the spring his throat was much stronger than any winter before. Subsequently, he never wore a scarf during the winter and only during a storm or on a severe winter day did not even turn up his over-coat collar. This case is not cited as a rarity but only as an illustration.

A little more care in keeping the feet dry and warm, and less attention to muffling the throat during the winter, would, in most cases, secure better health and a less number of colds. If we study the manner of dress of those whose employment takes them out in all weathers, we shall see that as a rule the milk-man, butcher, post-man and many others do not habitually wrap up their throats while on their rounds. Wearing a scarf during the winter has a tendency to make the throat tender, and, if it happens to be forgotten, or a mild day tempts you to go without it, such exposure is almost sure to be followed by a cold or sore throat.

It is better to accustom one's self to clear bracing air in the early fall, and it will soon be found that the additional muffling during the winter months is unnecessary.—*Golden Rule.*

Practical Benevolence.

A lady and her daughter in Berlin change places with their servants every other Sunday, doing the entire housework themselves, and giving up the drawing-room to the servants and their friends. The servants play on the piano, sing, read, knit, sew, and otherwise occupy themselves as they please, and are waited upon by the ladies precisely as they themselves wait on ordinary days. Usually the servants have company on these peculiar occasions, and the benevolent ladies have an extra dinner to cook, which they do, however with cheerfulness, washing the dishes afterward. The literal observation of the Golden Rule is doubtless what the Berlin ladies intend, though of course the rule does not specify that persons need practise it only on every fourteenth day.—*Fremdenblatt.*

READING FOR THE YOUNG.

UGLY OR JOLLY.

There's an ugly Old Man in the Moon to-night,
He scowls and he frowns till he frightens me quite;
I know why he looks in that terrible way,—
It's because I have been so naughty to-day.

I've broken my drum, and put burrs on the cat,
Went down to the brook and lost my new hat;
I felt pretty mean when my ma fished it out,—
And a lot more things, I'll not tell you about.

I did not intend so naughty to be,
But the mischief was all in my head, you see;
To-morrow I'll try to do something quite right,
And the Man in the Moon can but smile at night.

There's a jolly Old Man in the Moon to-night,
With a merry face and a smile so bright;
He looks down on me in a comical way—
Don't you think he knows that I've been good to-day?

—*Mrs. A. D. Bell, in Our Little Ones.*

A BABY CORMORANT.

He Tells What He Expects to Do in the Way of Fishing—A Great Colony of His Kind on the Danube River.

Here I sit in my nest of sea-weed, waiting for my dinner. You may call me Tom All-alone, if you like; but in another fortnight you won't see me on this rock, for then I shall be able to fly off and provide for myself. You want to know my real name? Well, I'm a cormorant, and I am given to understand that that word means a sea-cow. I daresay that is quite right, though I can not be said to bear any resemblance to your old friend Jim.

I am fond of eating. People say that cormorants are great and greedy eaters, and they are not far wrong. We kill a tremendous quantity of fishes, and for that reason are not popular in many localities—inland places especially. That is why, as a rule, we prefer to live by the ocean, where our finny prey are plentiful, and there is no one to complain of our taking just as many of them as we please; but a case is recorded of of some of our folk settling in the middle of a town, and choosing the church tower for their headquarters.

I think that the cormorants may be proud of the way in which they sustain the good name of the bird for intelligence. Though you would not expect us to be skilful at fishing for others, seeing that we are so fond of eating all that we catch, I understand that our Chinese brothers are regularly tamed and trained to fish for man. This training begins from their infancy. They have hardly left the shell before they are taken to the water and taught to do what their master tells them, and to bring to him the fishes which they capture.

The Chinaman goes out on the water on a bamboo raft, which he drives about with a paddle, and each raft carries three or four cormorants. The only intimation that the bird gets when it is wanted to angle is a rough push off the raft. Should it be unwilling or too lazy to fish, the man strikes the water with his paddle, or else gives the cormorant a tap with it, whereupon it dives to escape the blows. As soon as it secures a fish it rises to the surface, and, naturally enough, tries to swallow its victim. But, of course, John Chinaman has no intention to allow it to enjoy the fruits of its labor. How does he prevent this? Wise as we are, man is wiser; and so the cunning raftsman ties a string, or fastens a metal ring, round the bird's neck, which prevents it from swallowing any but the smallest fishes. The cormorant either brings its prey to the raft, or else the raft is swiftly paddled towards it lest the fish escape, for the bird has often a tough struggle before it catches a large fish. A net is cleverly thrown over the bird, and it is hauled on the raft. The fish is then forced from its grasp and pitched into a big basket, while the cormorant is rewarded with a mouthful of food, of which it is enable to partake by the ring being raised.

Sometimes a bird will make an attempt to escape. In this case the Chinaman paddles after it and soon overtakes it. But in order to crush these efforts after freedom, it is often the custom to chain the cormorant to the raft. I have heard that two of the birds will quarrel for the fish that one of them has caught, and that the unsuccessful angler will at times chase the more fortunate bird and try to deprive it of its victim. This proves they are capable of rivalry, and even of jealousy. These fishing exploits generally attract crowds of human spectators, who shout out loudly at the smart pieces of angling. I have no ambition to be a trained fisher, for, after all, it is slavery as compared with the life of the wild cormorants, who can fish in the sea the whole day if they choose, and only for themselves and their children.

I have heard there are colonies of cormorants on some of the islands of the Danube river. A party of sportsmen once visited them, and were received with shouts of laughter by the older birds, and with whistling noises by the younger. Their nerves were upset, however, by a shot, which made them dart from their nests with the speed of arrows. The observers having hidden themselves among the bushes, the birds cautiously returned, first flying round and round at a great height, spying whether the enemy had gone, and then flying to their nests with the same sudden rapidity. Despite all their care, a number of them were shot. The wounded defended themselves with marked courage, sending a dog off howling with pain, biting one man through his trousers, and nearly blinding another by striking him between his eyes.

Battles, stubbornly contested, often take place between comorants and herons, when the former try to drive the latter from their heronries. This comes of their leaving the sea and seeking to take up their dwellings inland. Rookeries, too, are attacked; but the rooks are no match for their powerful invaders. Four pairs of cormorants once dispossessed the herons of their nests in a high beech tree in Dutzenburg. In the autumn of the same year their number had grown to thirty. Next spring, and for many springs afterward, they came back in ever increasing crowds, till, it was estimated, at least seven thousand pairs afflicted the district. Fifty nests were counted in one tree. The mob constantly flying to and from the sea darkened the air, and their noise was deafening. It cost the natives several years of hard labor to get rid of the pest, the birds being ultimately either killed or driven away.

We are splendid swimmers, no bird excelling us in this respect. A boat, manned by the stoutest rowers of a man-of-war, would not overtake us. When hunting our prey beneath the surface our bodies are stretched out quite straight, and we force ourselves along with vigorous strokes of our feet. We are capital divers also, some of our adventurous friends having been captured in crab-pots at a depth of one hundred and twenty feet. These are gifts that I am not yet fortunate enough to possess, but I am assured by my parents that I shall be able to do all these fine things before long. With such a bright future in store for me, I am quite content to bide my time with patience, satisfied that I shall not be allowed at present to want for fishes. If I am not happy as a king, at least, I am quite as happy as most people—perhaps more so.—*Little Folks.*

FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!

Where Is It? Why, It Is in the Water! Isn't That Funny?

But you see it isn't a real fire, but only a fire-fish. Sweet creature, isn't he? Suppose you were a little, innocent mermaid, swimming alone for the first time; how would you feel if you were to meet this fellow darting toward you with his great red mouth open? Why, you would scream with fright, and swim to your mother as fast as you could, and catch hold of her tail for protection. At least, that is what I should do if I were a mermaid. But Mrs. Mermaid would tell you that the fire-fish will not hurt you unless you hurt him first, in which case he will prick you dreadfully with his long, sharp spines.

Nobody knows why this fish has such enormous, wing-like fins. Wise men used to think that he could raise himself out of the water with them, like the flying-fish; but it is now proved that he can not, and there seems to be no reason why a set of plain, small fins would not serve him just as well for swimming. He prefers warm water to cold; so he lives in the tropical seas, swimming about the coasts of India, Africa and Australia. The natives of Ceylon call him Ginimaha, and they think he is very good to eat. They take great care in catching him, for they are very much afraid of him, thinking that his sharp spines are poisoned, and can inflict a deadly wound. But in this they are too hard upon the fellow. He can prick them deeply and painfully, and he will if they meddle with him; but he is a perfectly respectable fish, and would not think of such a cowardly thing as poisoning anybody.—*Laura E. Richards, in Our Little Ones.*

PROGRESS IN JAPAN.

Important Educational Reforms Instituted by the Mikado's Government.

A Japanese citizen, educated in America, a man of great intelligence and worth, and now a professor in the University of Tokio, gives a very interesting account of the social changes that have occurred in Japan in the last twenty years. These changes began with the revolution which swept away feudalism, and were extraordinarily rapid and indiscriminate at first, the people unfortunately imbibing an impression that Western civilization was so perfect that it should supersede their own with all possible rapidity. This error led to a reaction, as might have been expected, and the revolution met with a sudden check; Japanese customs, Japanese education and Japanese morality and religion were revived, and European and American civilization was at a discount. But in the last two years another change has occurred, the people having had time to correct their judgment by reflection and experience. They no longer adopt foreign ways indiscriminately, but take them with such modifications as their own peculiar circumstances require, adhering at the same time to such features of their own civilization as time and experience have shown to be wise. "Buddhism is still the predominating faith, but Christianity is rapidly establishing itself among the more intellectual classes, and it is only a matter of time when the Christian religion will be accepted throughout the country. In all the large cities public schools are maintained, and it is compulsory that after attaining a certain age children shall be sent to school. In Tokio there are two large law schools, one of which is conducted in the French and the other in the English language. Added to these is an engineering college, with over twenty thousand volumes, and its extensive laboratories, which have been recently merged with the Imperial College."

Perhaps the most important of the educational reforms proposed and under way is that which seeks to introduce the Roman alphabet in place of the old Japanese symbolisms. This will secure the rapid affiliation of Japan with the modern world. The feasibility of the plan has been demonstrated. Already scientific books are printed in the Roman characters, and some of the newspapers have begun to use them in parts of their issues. This is a reform which must inevitably lead to many others, and it can not be long before Japan will take her place among the most intelligent countries of the world.—*Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.*

—It has been supposed that the name "Columbia" was first used in America in 1785; but Colonel Albert H. Hoyt has found it in a volume of poems composed in 1761, mostly by Harvard graduates, in honor of George III. and in commemoration of George II.—*Chicago Inter-Ocean.*